



# News Release

## Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DARPA ANNOUNCES NEW CHALLENGE COMPETITION**

*The DARPA Network Challenge Will Explore How Broad-Scope Problems Can Be Solved  
Using Internet-based Technologies*

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today announced the DARPA Network Challenge to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Internet. The competition requires participants to discover the exact position of 10 large, red weather balloons that DARPA will place in undisclosed locations across the continental United States. The first person to identify the location of all the balloons will win a \$40,000 cash prize. The balloons will be positioned on December 5, 2009.

“It is fitting for DARPA to announce this competition on the anniversary of the day that the first message was sent over the ARPANET, the precursor to the Internet,” said Dr. Regina E. Dugan, who made the announcement at a conference celebrating the anniversary. “In the 40 years since this breakthrough, the Internet has become an integral part of society and the global economy. The DARPA Network Challenge explores the unprecedented ability of the Internet to bring people together to solve tough problems.”

The DARPA Network Challenge is open to individuals of all ages, reflecting DARPA’s interest in attracting students to pursue careers in the areas of science and technology, including emerging specialties in the social sciences. Open to participants worldwide, the Challenge enables collaboration across borders, mobilizing individuals and groups to address difficult problems aided by the Internet.

This is the latest example of DARPA’s interest in reaching nontraditional sources of ideas and talent. [The Grand Challenge](#) competitions were started in 2004 to foster the development of autonomous robotic vehicle technology for use on the battlefield. The competition model for stimulating technological development enabled significant strides that will someday keep our men and women in uniform out of harm’s way.

“The DARPA Network Challenge taps into the same fresh thinking that made the earlier competitions a success,” said Dr. Norman Whitaker, who led DARPA’s most recent Challenge. “Future innovation depends on the upcoming generation of technologists who are discovering new, collaborative ways to approach problems that were not dreamt of 40 years ago.”

The 10 balloons will be placed in publicly accessible locations in the continental United States and will be on display for one day (December 5<sup>th</sup>) during daylight hours. The first participant to identify the latitude and longitude of all 10 balloons will receive the cash prize.

Event details can be found at [www.darpa.mil/networkchallenge](http://www.darpa.mil/networkchallenge) and updates on [Twitter.com/DARPA\\_News](https://twitter.com/DARPA_News).

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